

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Office Action dated April 4, 2008 has been carefully considered. Claims 1-13 are pending in the present application with claim 1 being in independent form. By the present Amendment, claims 1, 4, 8, 11 and 13 have been amended to further clarify the features of the present application and to correct minor formal errors.

Claims 1-4 and 7-10 remain been rejected as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,129,554 to Poth. Reconsideration of this rejection is respectfully requested.

The Examiner argues that Poth substantially discloses all the features of claim 1 of the present application. Applicants respectfully disagree.

Claim 1, as amended herein, relates to a coupling system between high-voltage electrical equipment including a connector that inserts in female connectors of the high voltage equipment the connector including an insulating shell inside which are housed conducting elements, whose external surface is partially covered by a conductive layer and a mechanical protection device, being an independent part to the rest of the elements of the coupling system and disposed surrounding the conductive layer and in contact with said conductive layer.

The coupling system of the present application is illustrated in Fig. 1, for example, of the present application. The coupling system includes a connector 1 including an insulating shell 2 inside of which is housed conductive elements and a conductive or semiconductive layer 3 formed on a part of the outer surface of the shell 2. The protection device 6 surrounds the conductive layer 3 and is in contact therewith. Thus, the conductive layer is incorporated with the insulative shell at a portion thereof and is exposed to the elements only at the portion that is surrounded by the protection device. Thus, the conductive layer is protected from mechanical erosion or other damage by the protection device.

The Examiner contends that Poth discloses all of the features of claim 1, for example, of the present application. Applicants respectfully disagree.

As was noted in Applicants' previous response, the coupling device of Poth is used to connect medium voltage switches, and thus, is not a coupling system between high voltage electrical equipment, as is required by claim 1, for example, of the present application.

In addition, while the Examiner argues that the elements GH1 and GH2 of Poth correspond to the "female connectors" of claim 1, this is incorrect. In claim 1 the female

connectors are a part of the high voltage equipment. In contrast, the bushings GH1 GH2 of Poth are not components of the high voltage equipment, but are a part of the coupling device and are inserted into the sleeve HS thereof.

Further, Poth fails to disclose a connector including "an insulating shell inside which are housed conducting elements, whose external surface is partially covered by a conductive layer," as is also required by claim 1 of the present application. The Examiner argues that the bushings GH1 and GH2 correspond to the insulating shell of the present application. As an initial matter, as is noted above, the Examiner also argues that bushings GH1 and GH2 are also female connectors. Thus, it would appear the Office Action is internally inconsistent as Applicants do not see how the same elements could be both female connectors of the high voltage equipment and an insulating shell of a connector. In addition, it is clear that the bushings GH1 and GH2 are not a part of the connector EK of Poth.

The Examiner also argues that element HS of Poth corresponds to the conductive layer of claim 1. However, it is clear based on the description of Poth that it is the layer LE that is conductive. Further, this layer does not correspond to the conductive layer of claim 1 since it completely covers the element HS, and thus, the external surface of HS is not "partially covered by a conductive layer," as required by claim 1, but is fully covered.

Further, Poth fails to disclose "a mechanical protection device, being an independent part to the rest of the elements of the coupling system and disposed surrounding the conductive layer and in contact with said conductive layer," as is required by claim 1. The Examiner argues that the spring DF is a mechanical protection device. This is also incorrect. As was noted in Applicants' previous response, the spring DF is used to press the pressure sleeves AH1, AH2 against container walls BW1, BW2. Thus, the spring is an integral part of the coupling system and is necessary to hold the system together. However, the spring DF does not provide any mechanical protection for the connector EK or the conductive layer LE since the spaces between the rings of the spring would leave substantial room to allow for damage to both of these elements. That is, the spring DF will not protect any element of Poth from mechanical erosion or other damage as the mechanical protection device of claim 1 does for the conductive layer thereof.

In addition, as is noted above, the spring DF is a necessary structural component of the coupling system of Poth, and thus, is not independent from the rest of the elements of the coupling system, as is further required by claim 1.

Further, it does not appear that element DF in Poth is in contact with element HS at all. Thus, even assuming that element DF were a protection device, which it is not, and the Examiner were correct in asserting the element HS is a conducting layer, which he is not, the element DF is not in contact with the alleged conductive layer HS, as is also required by claim 1, of the present application. For example, as can be seen in Figure 2 of Poth, the spring DF is separated from the layer HS, such that the spring DF does not contact the layer HS. Specifically, it is clear that the intermediate elements AH1, AH2 separate the spring DF from the element HS.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1, and the claims depending therefrom, are patentable over the cited art for at least the reasons described above.

In addition, with respect to the Examiner's contention that the spring DF consists of a conducting ring with respect to claim 2, this is also clearly incorrect. There is not suggestion anywhere in Poth that the spring DF includes such a conductive ring.

In addition, with regard to claims 4 and 7, Poth does not disclose that the spring DF includes an inductive current sensor and a capacitive current sensor. The Examiner argues that elements FP1, FP2 correspond to these elements. However, elements FP1, FP2 of Poth are not intensity or voltage sensors but are screens used to control electric field. In addition, these screens FP1, FP2 do not form any part of the spring DF.

Thus, these claims are also believed to be patentable over Poth for these reasons as well.

Claims 5-6 and 11-13 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Poth in view of German Patent reference no. 1135864 to Fisher. Reconsideration of this rejection is respectfully requested.

As is noted above, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 is patentable over Poth for at least the reasons described above. Further, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 is patentable over the combination of Poth and Fisher, since Poth and Fisher, either alone or in combination, fail to show or suggest the patentable features of claim 1 described above.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1, and the claims depending therefrom, including claims 5-6 and 11-13, are patentable over the cited art and are in condition for allowance.

In light of the remarks and amendments made herein, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1-13 of the present application are patentable over the cited art and are in condition for allowance.

Favorable reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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KJB:jl

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Keith J. Barkaus", is written over a horizontal line.

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